

**To:** Durant, Jennah[Durant.Jennah@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]  
**From:** Gray, David  
**Sent:** Sun 8/30/2015 12:45:47 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Revised language for "How EPA is responding" web page

## My 2 cents

# Roles of EPA and Other Responders After the 2015 Gold King Mine Release

On this page:

- [How is EPA Responding?](#)
- [Which Other Organizations are Involved in the Response?](#)

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## How EPA Is Responding

EPA is committed to working closely with response agencies and state and local officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns and to evaluate impact to water contaminated by the spill.

### Response Resources

- **EPA personnel from across the country, in coordination with supporting federal, tribal, state, and local agencies, continue response and recovery work throughout the watershed from Colorado to Lake Powell, Utah.**
- **EPA's toll-free call center 844-607-7600 continues to respond to community questions related to the spill.**
- **EPA is releasing data, information and documents available to the public as quickly as they become available.**

## **Water Monitoring, Sampling and Data Collection**

EPA teams have been deployed throughout the Animas and San Juan Rivers corridor continue collecting data. Teams sampled surface water in the Animas River as well as groundwater in private wells in Colorado and New Mexico.

The majority of samples indicate water quality has reached or is near pre-event conditions, allowing drinking water intakes to reopen and recreational and agricultural use of the Animas River to resume. EPA collected sediment sampling along several points of the river.

The Navajo Nation has reopened the San Juan River for irrigation. EPA continues to share sampling results as soon as they become available, with data and customizable maps posted to the Gold King Mine Response website.

## **Mine Discharge Treatment**

Mine water is being treated in a series of settling ponds constructed near the portal. The treatment appears to be effective. We are decreasing the acidity of the water (raising the pH level) with the addition of lime and sodium hydroxide solution to facilitate sedimentation of the metals in the ponds. The treated water that is being discharged to Cement Creek has a pH of 5.5.

## **Coordination among EPA Offices and with State, Local and Tribal Governments**

- EPA's Region 8 office in Denver, which is responsible for the implementation of our programs within Colorado, Utah and Southern Ute Tribe, is working in close coordination with:
  - EPA's Region 6 office in Dallas, which implements our programs in New Mexico
  - EPA's Region 9 office in San Francisco, which implements our programs in the Navajo Nation, Arizona
  - the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah
  - the Southern Ute Tribe and the Navajo Nation
  - County and city governments throughout the watershed.

## **Outreach and Communication**

Sampling data from the past several weeks has consistently shown environmental conditions have returned to pre-event conditions. EPA continues sharing as quickly as possible with the public any updated information on response activities, results, impacts to public health, and other related information.

**Other Organizations Involved in the Response – I would drop the language and just list the organizations. Also, it is very likely that this is NOT a**

**complete listing.**

## **U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)**

- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS)**
- **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBor)**
- **The Navajo Nation**
- **Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)**
- **Colorado Office of Emergency Management (OEM)**
- **La Plata County, CO**
- **San Juan County, CO**
- **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)**
- **State of Colorado Southwest Incident Management Team**
- **State of Colorado Northwest Incident Management Team**
- **State of Colorado Bolder Incident Management Team**
- **State of Colorado Jefferson County Incident Management Team**
- **City of Durango, CO**
- **New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)**
- **New Mexico Department of Health**
- **New Mexico Office of the State Engineer**
- **New Mexico Department of Game and Fish**
- **County of San Juan, NM**

## **New Mexico Department of Agriculture – NMSU**

### **City of Aztec**

### **City of Farmington**

- **San Juan Basin Health Department**
- **U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)** – we are coordinating with ATSDR in response to public health concerns/questions associated with the mine waste plume. ATSDR has been in communication with local health officials at San Juan Basin Health in La Plata County (Durango) and the San Juan County Health Department in Silverton, Colorado.

- **New Mexico Environment Department** – we are working closely with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to evaluate possible impacts in New Mexico. Potentially impacted water systems have been notified and precautions are in place to ensure drinking water in homes is protected. With NMED, we provided free water quality testing for private drinking water well owners in the affected area as well as water quality monitoring for the five drinking water systems with intakes from the river.
- **Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office** has been monitoring the effects of the spill on terrestrial and aquatic wildlife since the incident began. CPW is watching for any impacts on wildlife, whether they are acute or chronic. Fish are especially sensitive to changes in water quality. CPW is also monitoring a control station on a clean tributary. The **Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment** is assisting with drinking water concerns. They indicated they are optimistic that the effects of the spill on terrestrial wildlife will be minimal.
- **Navajo Nation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs** - Our Region 9 office in San Francisco is working with the Navajo Nation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. EPA has a liaison officer to the Navajo Nation's Command Center in Window Rock to discuss and plan short- and long-term EPA assistance to the tribe. The Navajo EPA surface water monitoring program (Shiprock office) has been collecting water and sediment samples from the San Juan River.